

injured by his associations. Ten years before, or ten years later, he would have made a much better figure. But was I to begin my book ten years earlier or ten years later for William Penn's sake? The Quakers were extremely civil. So was I. They complimented me on my courtesy and candour.¹

It is likely that the Quakers did not do much of the talking, and that if they had ' absolutely nothing to say ' it was because they were not allowed to speak. When Macaulay's mind was made up he was never given to listening to the arguments of the other side,²

Whether it was a question of measures or men, we see always in Macaulay this same lack of openness and accessibility to new ideas or new information. The defect was a permanent source of weakness to him as a historian*. He formed an opinion about the character of a man from only part of the evidence, and having formed it he was unaffected by further evidence. Instead of revising his opinion as he ought to have done, he made the new evidence square with the preconceived opinion by any device which occurred to him. There is a story told about Carlyle and Macaulay which illustrates Macaulay's way of forming his conceptions of historical personages.

Almost the only occasion on which I remember to have heard Carlyle engaged in an elaborate defence of his opinions or assertions was at a breakfast-party

in London^
against an opponent no less formidable than
Lord Mac-
aulay. The subject of dispute was the
character of Henry
Cromwell, whom Lord Macaulay described,
in words
quoted from Mrs. Hutchinson's Memoirs, as *
a deboshed

¹Journal, Feb. 5, 1849. **Trevelyan**, ii. 251-2.

²Cf. the experience of Max Miiller, who was asked to
discuss new regula-
tions for the civil service with Macaulay, and who was
totally enable to get
a word in edgeways. Auld Lang Syne, ser. i (1^98), pp.
161-2.